

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic VIRGINIA INTERMONT COLLEGE (PREFERRED) (VHLC FILE #102-14)

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street &amp; number Moore and Harmeling streets

N/A not for publication

city, town Bristol N/A vicinity of

state Virginia code 51 county (city) code 520

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Virginia Intermont College

street &amp; number Moore &amp; Harmeling streets

city, town Bristol N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24201

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bristol City Hall

street &amp; number N/A

city, town Bristol state Virginia 24201

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title None to date has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate N/A N/A ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

## 7. Description

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☐ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Located on a hill at Moore and Harmeling streets in Bristol, the five-acre Virginia Intermont College campus overlooks the town's central business district. The campus contains four structures of historical significance: East Hall, the Main Building, Hodges Hall, and the Gymnasium. All are brick structures. The Main Building is designed in a aggressively eclectic style which relies heavily on Romanesque, Shavian, and Queen Anne motifs. East and Hodges halls, while sympathetic in design to Main are less exuberant expressions of their age. The Gymnasium is more utilitarian in design.

#### ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Since there are four structures to be considered, the Main Building will be described first followed by the ancillary buildings.

#### The Main Building

Roughly shaped in plan, the Main Building can be divided into four parts: an administration wing south of the major facade (south), a central pavilion with tower, a dining wing to the west, and a chapel wing to the east.

The administration wing (no longer used as such) is a four-story mass whose rounded southern corners form two turrets of uneven heights which project from the hipped roof. Appended to this mass is an early 20th-century brick, arched porch whose concrete and brick stairs provide access to the building.

The ground floor of the main facade of the structure is three bays wide with a central trabeated doorway, flanked by hood-molded arched windows. At the second floor this relationship reverses and the central door, which opens onto a three-bay balcony, is arched, while the flanking windows are trabeated. At this level a molded brick string course girds the building while giant consoles, which support a wooden balcony that extends from the central bay on the next floor, begin at this level. At the third floor, arched windows with hood molds flank the orb pendants of a pair of bartizans which project upward two stories to terminate in ball finials. At the fourth floor level, all openings are trabeated and a corbeled brick entablature is topped by a slightly projecting cornice of wood below a hipped roof. At the level of this cornice, a brick-faced, gabled dormer corbels out of the building, flanked by the aforementioned bartizans. A hood-molded, triple-arched window opening spans between the bartizans. Atop this opening is checkerwork masonry surmounted by a brick string course. Wooden louvres top the masonry to the ridge of the gable. The east and west elevations of this projecting pavilion are rather sedate, merely continuing the string courses and fenestration patterns around the building and lacking the bold drama of the dormer windows.

The central pavilion of the structure is axially symmetrical about the central tower atop its hipped roof. The entire southern facade was once swathed in a

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1891 **Builder/Architect** Walter P. Tinsley

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Founded in 1884 to meet the demands of local Baptists for women's education in Southwest Virginia, Virginia Intermont represents one of the earliest efforts to ameliorate the quality of women's education in this area of the state. The Main Building, constructed when the school moved from Glade Spring, Virginia to Bristol, and designed by W.P. Tinsley, reflects the aggressive eclecticism of its age. Encompassing a multitude of functions under one roof, the building's plan reflects normative 19th-century academic planning. Elements of the exterior decoration are vaguely Shavian and vaguely Romanesque, while the interior reflects the late influence of the Eastlake mode in Southwest Virginia.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the late 19th century, Southwest Virginia was considered a missionary territory by the Baptists of eastern Virginia and by the State Mission Board. There were few, if any, self-supporting Baptist churches in this area at that time. This condition forced the Baptist churches that were close together to form mission fields. The towns of Glade Spring, Greenfield, and Friendship joined together and asked the State Mission Board to recommend someone to take charge of the field and to assist them financially in the support of a pastor.

The State Mission Board recommended the Reverend J.R. Harrison, and in the early 1880s he, with his wife and four children, moved to the town of Glade Spring to become pastor of this field. Mr. Harrison had previously visited Hollins Institute, now Hollins College, and he was much impressed with the great work for the higher education of women being done at that institution. He was eager to establish a women's school along similar lines in this section of the state.

The Baptist Association of Virginia was already quite active in the field of women's education. Besides Hollins Institute, the Association operated ten other women's schools. In 1884 the Association's Committee on Education clearly stated the denomination's pedagogical goals in the following statement:

We desire to assert...our...conviction of the importance of and value of education to the promotion of which we are committed by our traditions. We favor enlargement of the means and facilities of sound Christian education, so that its benefits and blessings may be more universally diffused among the people. ...The Children of our people should be placed under such influences as foster and strengthen the Christian and denominational associations and ties.<sup>1</sup>

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #6)

Bulletin of Southwest Virginia Institute, 1894, 1976.

Cooke, E.C. Virginia Intermont College. Bristol: Virginia Intermont, 1976.

Minutes of the Virginia Baptist General Association, 1884-93. Richmond, VA.

Reuben, E.A. A History of Baptists in Virginia. Richmond: Virginia Baptist General Association 1973.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approx. 5 acres

Quadrangle name Bristol, TN-VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

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3	9	4	7	8	0
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4	0	5	1	5	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Virginia Intermont College is bounded on the N by Lester St., on the E by Russell St., on the S by Harmeling St., and on the W by Moore St. The nominated property consists of five acres of an approximately twelve-acre tract. (See Continuation Sheet #6)

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION STAFF

organization VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION date August 1984

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director

title VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

date August 21, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

EXP. 10/31/84

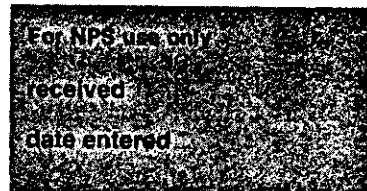
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VIRGINIA INTERMONT COLLEGE, BRISTOL, VA

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7

Page 1

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

two-story Eastlake-style porch. This decorative element has been removed, so that one is presented with four stories of twelve bays of evenly spaced double-hung windows. The method of spanning the openings alternated by story between hood-molded arched openings and trabeated openings spanned by jack arches. On the fourth floor the orbed terminations of each pair of ball-finialed and annulated bartizans frame the central bay of each side of the pavilion, creating a caesura in the corbeled and projecting cornices which otherwise gird the entire building. In a space thus created is inserted a dormer window of the same configuration as the one on the administration wing of the Main Building. At the corners of the central pavilion, there remains a corbeled square block, the remnant of small square bartizans that were originally placed on each corner of the building.

Crowning the hipped roof, the central tower completes the composition of the central pavilion. Extensively remodeled in the 1970s, it is now a shadow of its former High Victorian Gothic self. It currently consists of a rectangular base with louvered openings which supports a extremely steep, vaguely Victorian roof.

The east, or Chapel wing, repeats the motifs established on the administration wing. Slightly lower in height than the rest of the building, the two-story bay structure is fenestrated by paired round-arched openings with hood molds, which are almost Gothic in form and continue around the building. It is entered through a more recent brick arched porch. A string course of terra cotta units molded in foliate forms circles the eastern wing above the ground floor. The second floor windows lack the verticality of their first-floor counterparts and are interrupted in the central bay by the now familiar bartizan-flanked dormer. In this instance, however, an inset panel of terra cotta elements molded in foliate forms enlivens the lower area of the dormer between the ball-shaped termini of the bartizans. At the cornice level of this wing, the motifs established on the central pavilion are repeated. The West wing, which houses dining and dormitory space, continues the vocabulary established in the central area of the Main Building--the only difference being small gabled dormers added to the East side of the projecting pavilion and a molded brick string course which runs along the south and west facades of the wing and returns on the east and north facades. The east facade of the Chapel wing continues the fenestration pattern and is connected to East Hall by a wooden enclosed walkway at the second level.

The rear (north) elevation of the Main Building retains the pavilion form and and rhythm established on the south facade. The central wing is replaced by a slightly projecting pavilion, and eight simple gabled dormers with louvered openings enliven the already complex hipped roof line. Cornice treatment is continued from the south side and a simple one-story porch is attached at the ground floor.

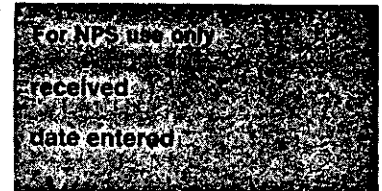
The interior of the building consists of double loaded corridors housing classrooms or dormitory rooms except for the west and east wings which house a cast-iron columned dining room and a chapel-turned-ballet studio respectively. Wainscoting, stair stringers, and newel posts are designed in an Eastlake manner throughout the building.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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Continuation sheet #2

Item number 7

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**7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis**Gymnasium

The gym and pool building is a simple two-story, multi-bay, hipped-roofed structure whose bays are defined by limestone-capped pilasters. The five-bay front (west) facade contains five doors on the ground floor which are topped by fixed multi-paned sash above. The side elevation continues the pilaster treatment with windows filling each bay on the second floor. The interior consists of a large gymnasium and pool.

Hodges Hall

At the western side of the campus is Hodges Hall. Built in 1927 the nine-bay building was intended to blend in with the eclectic style of the Main Building. At the ground level on the western facade, the building is articulated by large jack arch windows flanking a stone segmental-arched doorway. The ascendant chambranles are articulated as a pair of carved pilasters which extend above the door and are topped by ball finials. Above the arch of the doorway, the transverse chambranle projects outward with a beak molding containing foliated modillions.

Above the molding, stone tumbling courses pitch backward to the brick wall. A stone string course separates the ground floor from the next two stories, whose bays are expressed by single and paired arched double-hung windows with hood molds. A string course which unites the sills of the fourth floor girds the entire building. Above the central bay of the west facade the gable motif of the Main Building is repeated and interrupts the projecting cornice and corbeled entablature of the hipped roof. The four-bay north and south facades follow the same general pattern as the western facade with the exception that, on the north facade, a brick arcade connects Hodges Hall to the Main Building. On the east facade of Hodges Hall, the elevation lacks the central dormer motif and it is replaced at the roof level by three gabled dormers evenly spaced along the hipped roof. The interior consists of double loaded corridors leading to classrooms and dormitory spaces.

East Hall

East Hall is a five-and-one-story structure containing offices and classroom space. Its massing roof line and decorative elements were clearly intended as subdued adjuncts to the Main Building. The hip-roofed East Hall is massed as two slightly projecting end pavilions connected by a central area. The building is situated at the military crest of the hill and so the basement is partly exposed to the east. Paired double-hung windows provide the only fenestration at the basement level. This level is separated from the ground level by a stone string course which extends along the east, west, and south sides of the building. At the ground level, the fenestration is arcuate and incorporates carved stone keystones as decorative elements. These arches were later filled in and now contain simple pairs of standard sash double-hung windows.

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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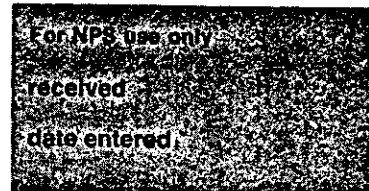
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VIRGINIA INTERMONT COLLEGE, BRISTOL, VA

Continuation sheet #3

Item number 7

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7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

In the central area of the building, a five-bay arched brick porch with molded keystones, stone string course, and brick parapet with stone coping enlivens the facade. Entry to the ground level is provided by brick stairs on the east and west sides of the porch. The ground floor is further enlivened by lozenge-shaped decorative elements placed below the sill of the windows and in the arch spandrels.

The second through fourth floors are treated in a rather planar manner with the windows providing relief through their alternating A, B, A rhythm on the end pavilions and a 3, 1, 3 rhythm in the central area. At the level of the window heads of the second floor, a brick string course surrounds the building. At the eave of the roof is a heavy projecting cornice surmounting a brick string course. This cornice is interrupted in the central bay of each pavilion by a brick gabled dormer whose fenestration, in the form of a serliana, continues the wall line upwards. Over the central area, two small gabled dormers protrude from the roof. They are filled with paired double-hung windows.

The east and west elevations continue the same general pattern of the south facade with filled arched openings on the main level, alternating single and paired double-hung windows on the second through fourth floors, and a gabled dormer rising above the cornice in the central bay of the facade. The west facade differs from the east in the addition of a wooden walkway to the Main Building at the second-floor level. The north facade of the building, save for the subtraction of a porch and the addition of fire escapes at each end, is a mirror image of the south facade. The interior of East Hall is quite simple. The basement and ground floors house offices and common rooms, while the upper floors contain classrooms.

SMB

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

The majority of people in this section of Virginia were not sympathetic to, and some were actually opposed to, higher education for women. The general public sentiment was that a public school education was sufficient for women, and that to give them an education equal to that of men would destroy the home, because women would enter the work force and neglect their homes.

In 1882, after waging a successful campaign to prohibit the sale of whiskey in the town of Glade Spring, Harrison decided to establish his school there, and arranged for the purchase of land across from the Glade Spring Baptist Church. The first name given to the school was Southwest Virginia Female Institute. It opened its doors in the fall of 1884 with three teachers, thirteen boarding students and a number of day students. The first president of the school was Allison Hutton, a graduate of Emory and Henry College. In 1885 the Baptist General Association minutes recorded that the Southwest Virginia Institute had "come into being to meet the pressing demand for female higher education among Baptists in that section of the state." 2

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

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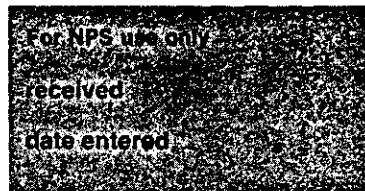
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VIRGINIA INTERMONT COLLEGE, BRISTOL, VA

Continuation sheet #4

Item number 8

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

By 1889 the school had outgrown its facilities at Glade Spring, although a three-story building had been added. Land needed for expansion not being available at Glade Spring, the Board of Trustees began to search elsewhere for a more suitable location, and they chose the present location at Bristol, Virginia. Aside from the fact that the climate of Bristol resembled that of the health resort of Asheville, North Carolina, and was believed to have curative powers, no clear reasons were given for the school's removal to a location further west. The Trustees purchased the site overlooking the city of Bristol for \$7,000 and budgeted \$50,000 for new facilities. In the fall of 1891 the school was moved from Glade Spring to the new academic complex at Bristol, which included the present Main Building, Dining Hall and Chapel, as well as the Conservatory of Music (later destroyed).

The Main Building, although somewhat altered at the tower and corners, remains an exuberant expression of a combination of several modes. It is vaguely Romanesque in its use of hood molds, turrets, and bartizans flanking the dormers but the checkerwork and terra cotta elements are decidedly Shavian in character. The construction date of 1890 is consistent with such aggressive eclecticism.

Walter P. Tinsley, the architect, began his practice in Knox County, Tennessee, producing the Knox County Courthouse (1884-89). In 1885 he left Tennessee for Lynchburg, Virginia, where he designed several frame residences and a school. Tinsley was instrumental in the formation of the Southern Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and was elected the chapter's first secretary and treasurer. Upon completion of his work at Virginia Intermont, he gave up his architectural career to become a Baptist minister.

S.D. Jones, a son-in-law of the founder of the school, served as its president until 1898, when he resigned and moved to Atlanta, Georgia. The loss of Mr. Jones to the school was unfortunate. During the next four years, the school had four presidents and its indebtedness grew to such proportions that a court decreed its sale at public auction. In order to save the school as a Baptist institution, five leading citizens of Bristol formed a corporation in June 1902 for the express purpose of buying the school. This corporation purchased the school for \$2,756 in cash and assumed its mortgage.

At this time the name of the school was changed from Southwest Virginia Institute to Virginia Institute, or V.I. A committee of the Trustees was appointed to secure a president for the school. This committee invited Dr. John T. Henderson, who was then president of Carson-Newman College of Jefferson City, Tennessee, to become its president, and some members of the committee went to Jefferson City to interview him. When they arrived, they found Dr. Henderson convalescing from smallpox. Because of his illness they did not go into his home, but talked to him from the street. Dr. Henderson accepted the position and moved to Bristol in June 1903, to take charge of the school.

During the summer of 1903, Dr. Henderson traveled throughout Southwest Virginia presenting the merits of V.I., and secured the promises of a large number of girls for the fall session. At that time no formal registrations were taken, and he had

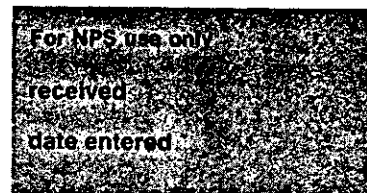
(See Continuation Sheet #5)



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Continuation sheet #5

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8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

only promises. As the time for the opening of the school approached, Dr. Henderson was fearful that the girls would not come. He knew that a great crowd of Bristol people would be at the railway station on the opening day to see how many girls came, and in order to save himself embarrassment, he asked that the train be stopped at the Moore Street crossing to let the girls off. This the railroad officials did, and a great number of girls arrived that day. After the arrival of so many out-of-town girls, quite a few Bristol girls were enrolled as day students.

In 1910 Dr. Henderson thought that the time had come when the school should be changed from institute to college. At the last faculty meeting in the spring, Dr. Henderson asked that the teachers who would be returning keep the change in mind and suggest names which they thought would be appropriate for the school. A new name suggested by a professor, Virginia Intermont College, was unanimously adopted.

Dr. Henderson served as president for eleven years, resigning in 1914, and Dr. H.G. Noffsinger succeeded him. Dr. Noffsinger served as president of the school for thirty-one years, and under his efficient administration, the mortgage indebtedness of the school was liquidated, and the following buildings erected: the Library (1940), East Hall (ca. 1925), Hodges Science Hall (1928), Edwards Infirmary (destroyed), the Swimming Pool and Gymnasium (ca. 1935). Hodges Hall, East Hall, and the Gymnasium were all built in a style sympathetic to that of the Main Building.

At the inception of Dr. Noffsinger's administration, the school was changed from a senior to a junior college. The progress of the school during these years was due largely to Dr. Noffsinger's untiring efforts and zeal for its welfare. At the time he came to the school it was very much in debt, and when he resigned it was entirely free from debt and possessed an endowment of \$600,000.

The school has continued in good health. Since 1955 several more buildings have been built on the campus: a Student Center (1959), Fine Arts Center (1961), Science Building (1963), and Memorial Hall (1975). In the early 1970s the school abandoned its high school curriculum and then graduated its first four-year class since 1914 in 1972. The school has also abandoned its single sex status and now accepts men into its programs.

SMB/SWE

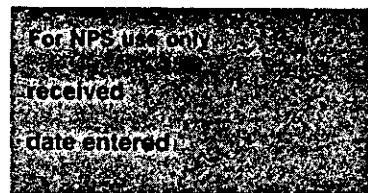
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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the Virginia General Baptist Association Annual Meeting, 1884, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the Virginia General Baptist Association Annual Meeting, 1885, p. 46.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

VIRGINIA INTERMONT COLLEGE, BRISTOL, VA

Continuation sheet #6

Item number 9, 10

Page 1, 1

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Virginia Intermont College." Bristol Herald Courier, 1 September 1983, pp. 2-24.

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA -- Boundary Justification

Boundary Justification: The bounds are drawn to include four structures: East Hall, Main Building, Hodges Hall, and the Gymnasium.

DATES  
Y. AUTHORITY

ES BRANCH  
000 FEET  
6(NW) 1557 N NW

WYNDALE 206-NE  
ABINGDON 12-NE

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

BRISTOL QUADRANGLE  
TENNESSEE-VIRGINIA

206 SW

82°07'30"  
36°37'30"

USGS 7.5' quadrangle  
Bristol, Tenn. - Va.

(scale:1:24000)  
1959 (PR 1968, 1978)

VIRGINIA INTERMONT COLLEGE, Bristol, Va.

UTM References:

17/394780/4051500

